

of the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, will marry New Jersey schoolteacher Amy Petitgout in a small, private ceremony con-

spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly. They are worried about

the compound's future use will be in line with what the senator wished for the property.

Patrick Kennedy declined to

den largely away by fences, driveways and the green sea of Nantucket Sound. Still, sightseers try their best to spy a glimpse.

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# § Farmers may get relief on red tape for laborers

By JERRY ZREMSKI

NEWS WASHINGTON BUREAU CHIEF

WASHINGTON — Maureen Torrey can't quite understand why she had to fill out 14 pounds of federal paperwork in order to hire 44 immigrants as temporary laborers on her family vegetable farm in Elba, north of Batavia.

And now, thanks to a Thursday meeting that Rep. Louise M. Slaughter set up with a top official from the U.S. Department of Labor, Torrey might not have to do quite so much paperwork anymore.

Torrey was one of about a dozen farmers from upstate New York and Vermont that Slaughter brought together with several lawmakers and Seth D. Harris, deputy secretary

of labor, for a discussion about the problems farmers are having getting federal approval for their laborers.

And after two hours of talks, Harris agreed to try to shrink the paperwork overwhelming farmers seeking temporary help to bring in the crops.

"It was a very constructive discussion, and we learned a lot about some of the administrative frustrations the farmers are experiencing," Harris said. "We learned enough that we can go back and try to come up with some constructive solutions."

Some "quick fixes" could be in the offing to make the federal approval process more efficient, Harris added.

That's certainly good news to Torrey.

"We had a very good meet-

ing," she said. "We've gotten these doors open, and we've got some sort of system that the department is communicating with us and we are communicating with the department."

That's important because many produce farms in New York and across the country rely on temporary immigrant labor. Those workers need temporary visas, but the Department of Labor approval process has grown increasingly cumbersome, said Slaughter, a Fairport Democrat.

"We've had serious problems over the years trying to get the crops picked," Slaughter said. "But today I think we got a lot done. . . . We are on the cusp of solving a lot of problems, not just for New York and Vermont, but for the rest of the country as

well."

Harris said he was amenable to a suggestion from Rep. Kathleen C. Hochul, D-Hamburg, that the Labor Department allow farmers to file more of the required documents electronically.

"I was very surprised to learn that there wasn't the use of technology one would expect," Hochul said. "Why isn't all of this happening via e-mail?"

Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning, also attended the meeting.

"Immigration and farm jobs are critical issues in upstate," Reed said before the meeting. "Unnecessary delays negatively impact our ability to harvest crops in a timely manner."

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